

## Leviticus 20:1-10 - Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

- In chapters 20 and 21 the Lord tells Moses to instruct the Israelites both "how to live" and "how not to live" now that they're out of Egypt.
- It's important to remember that Leviticus is a survival manual of sorts to teach Israel how to not only survive, but also thrive in the land.
- God gives this to them because He wants them to live good and live right. He knows what's best for them that they may live holy lives.

- God knows that a holy life is a happy life and He's grieved when He sees His children suffering unnecessarily because of disobedience.
- It's critical we understand that this comes from the heart of a loving God Who forewarns us to avoid the consequences of unholy living.
- Some of us learn to obey the easy way, but most of us learn the hard way because we have to find out for ourselves that God was right.

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name.

- Once again, the Lord is forbidding the Israelites to offer child sacrifices to the god Molech, which we looked at back in Leviticus 18:21.
- Here in Leviticus chapter 20, the Lord takes it a step further by saying that if anyone disobeys this, they shall surely be put to death.
- The reason is it defiles the sanctuary and profanes His holy name. Sin is not bad because it's forbidden, it's forbidden because it's bad.

4 And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, 5 then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

- Now God takes it to the next level saying; "in the event they don't mete out this judgment and kill those who sacrifice to Molech, He will."
- Suffice it to say, God takes this very seriously and though He is seemingly harsh, God is in effect being both loving and just.
- He's lessening their punishment because they're fate has been sealed, and He's protecting the Israelites from being corrupted by them.

- One might argue that this has no application to us today by virtue of the fact that sacrificing children to Molech isn't practiced anymore.
- I believe this applies to us in two ways; first, with abortion, we sacrifice children to the god of pleasure, practicality, and prosperity today.
- Secondly, if we don't abort those babies, they are still likely to be sacrificed to the god of career, convenience, and selfish success.

6 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.

- God reiterates that these occultic practices are explicitly forbidden. Notice that the Israelites were not given any justice to mete out.
- One thought is that when someone dabbles in the occult, they open themselves up to spiritual forces that turn them away from God.
- It's as if God is saying that He will set His face against that person and cut him off from his people because he's turned away from God.

7 Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. 8 And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

- On the heels of saying one can be turned away from God, He now says to "consecrate yourselves" to God because He is a Holy God.
- What makes this so interesting and maybe even a little bit confusing is that in verse eight, He says He is the Lord who sanctifies us.
- Conversely, in verse seven God says to "sanctify yourselves," which seems to contradict verse eight saying it's God Who sanctifies us.

- So now the question becomes; "which is it?" "Are we to consecrate or sanctify ourselves, or is the Lord the one who sanctifies us?"
- The answer is; "yes." I don't mean to be coy, it's just that it doesn't always have to be an either or answer. Sometimes it is both.
- Consecration and sanctification have a twofold meaning. It's to be set apart "to" God so that we can in turn be set apart "from" sin.
- This is an example of that in that when we are set apart to Him and set apart from sin we are cooperating with the sanctifying process.

"As we fellowship with Him, listen to Him, and obey Him we experience the unmistakable sanctifying process. 'Sanctify yourselves,' God says, 'and as you do, I will sanctify you.' Without Him we can't, without us, He won't."

Jon Courson

9' For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him.

- Before we can understand what this is saying, we need to first have an understanding of what this is "not" saying.
- This is not saying that anytime a child is disrespectful or disobedient and curses or yells at their parents that they are to be put to death.
- What it is saying is children who pronounced what was known and practiced by the pagans as a "death curse" were to be put to death.

One commentator wrote; "Elaborate curses, many of which appear to have the nature of magical spells, were current in the ancient Near East, and amongst superstitious people which often worked with devastating effect since in the eastern mind the curse carried with itself its own power of execution."

10 'The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.

- Again, in this chapter God is laying down the penalties for the specific sins that we studied about previously in Leviticus chapters 18-19.
- In other words, here-to-for God has only laid down the law, and now He lays down the specific penalties for the breaking of that law.
- Here, it is against the law of God to commit adultery, and if one were to break this law, it would be punishable with the death penalty.

- Naturally, especially in our day, the death penalty is disproportionate to the crime of adultery, and quite frankly makes God seem harsh.
- Before we rush to judgment we would do well to see the “why” behind the “what” lest we see this as God’s harshness and unfairness.
- Though not exhaustive, I would like to present three reasons I believe that God would impose the death penalty for sins like adultery.

**1. PROTECTION** - Because sin is contagious and it can spread like a cancer and be very deadly, ultimately destroying the Israelites.

**2. DIRECTION** - Because the Savior of the world would need to come from the Israelites, and the bloodline could not be corrupted.

**3. COMMUNICATION** - Because the Israelites were to bless the nations of the world by their unique relationship with their living God.

- One might wonder if they actually put to death anyone caught in the act of adultery. The reality is that they didn’t because they wouldn’t.
- The reason for this is because the “eyewitnesses,” would be the ones to cast the first stone in the carrying out of the stoning to death.
- It’s possible that the required “two or three eyewitness,” were unwilling to “cast the first stone,” because they themselves were guilty.

- Many of you may be thinking about the time that they brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus, which is found in John 8:1-12.

- The fact that they didn’t bring the man with her indicates that it wasn’t so that she would be stoned to death, it was to trap Jesus.

- Interesting, Jesus would say; “he who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.” They were guilty, but hadn’t been caught.

- There’s a reason why I’m taking a little bit of time on just this one verse about adultery and its penalty. Please indulge me for a moment.

- If I see this as God wanting us to emulate and imitate Him and not the pagan practices of the world, then this would explain a lot.

- See, if my life is unholy as the world is unholy instead of my life being holy as God is holy, then it’s no wonder my life is the way it is.

- If this law is for the protection of my life, the direction in my life, and the communication from my life, then my life will be in shambles.

- Let me say the same thing in a different way; “if I imitate an unholy and adulterous world in how I live my life, I won’t have a fulfilling life.

- Furthermore, I’m out from under the spout where God’s protection and direction come out thus the destroying and corrupting of my life.

- Now, when the world reads the book of my life, what’s communicated is that there’s nothing that sets apart my life from their worldly life.

- It’s been said that the world watches how a believers lives their lives, they want to know two things; “is it real, and does it work!”

- As Christians, I don’t think that we realize how much the world watches our lives, and even reads our lives hoping to see the “real deal.”

**2 Corinthians 3:2-3** 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. NIV